

Documents on Diplomacy: The Source

"I Desire to Place on the Record..."

Ambassador Johnson to Secretary Stimson, Peking, September 22, 1931

625. My 615, September 21, 2 p.m., referring to Nanking's appeal to us under the Kellogg Pact, also my 614, September 21, noon.

I desire to place on record the following as my personal reaction to events described in my telegram above referred to and to the responsibilities of powers signatory to Kellogg Pact in relation thereto.

1. According to all information available to me here, I am driven to the conclusion that the forceful occupation of all strategic points in South Manchuria, including the taking over and operation of public utilities, banks, and in Mukden at least the functions of civil government, is an aggressive act by Japan apparently long planned and when decided upon most carefully and systematically put into effect. I find no evidence that these events were the result of accident nor were they the acts of minor and irresponsible officials.

2. By article 1 of the Kellogg Treaty the high contracting parties, among which is Japan, renounce war "as an instrument of national policy in their relations with one another." By article 2 they agree "that the settlement or solution of all disputes all [or] conflicts of

whatever nature or of whatever origin they may be, which may arise among them, shall never be sought except by pacific means."

3. It is my conviction that the steps taken by Japan in Manchuria must fall within any definition of war and certainly may not be considered as a pacific means of settling a dispute with China, a nation also adherent to the treaty.

4. The treaty providing for the renunciation of war as a national policy was a solemn undertaking on the part of the nations of the West and those nations now stand at the bar of the nations of the East to answer for their sincerity.

5. It seems to me necessary that the powers signatory to the Kellogg Treaty owe it to themselves and to the world to pronounce themselves in regard to this Japanese act of aggression which I consider to have been deliberately accomplished in utter and cynical disregard of obligations which Japan as a nation shares with the other signatories of that pact.

JOHNSON

Source

Vincent Ferraro Home Page at Mt. Holyoke College: Source: U.S., Department of State, Publication 1983, *Peace and War: United States Foreign Policy, 1931-1941* (Washington, D.C.: U.S., Government Printing Office, 1943, pp. 155-56

<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/interwar/johnson.htm>